

Serial No. 08/645,073
Group Art Unit: 2766
Examiner: Gregory, G

25. (ONCE AMENDED) A method for ascertaining a sales period exists, said method comprising:

reading a period stored on a self contained computer readable storage medium indicating an interval period of time;

generating present time data indicating a present time;

comparing the period stored on the storage medium with the present time to judge whether said present time falls within the period; and

requesting content stored on the storage medium when said comparing determines that said present time falls within said period.

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REMARKS

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-25 are pending.

Various claims are amended.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-25 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by McMullan, Jr et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,255,086 (Hereinafter "McMullan '086"), or McMullan, Jr et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,142,690 (Hereinafter "McMullan '690").

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In the previously filed Amendment, the Applicant argued that in the relied upon references, the content to be served and the time period are not stored on the same medium, but exist in completely different locations/systems.

In response, the Examiner indicates that his position is that a broad definition of "content medium" can comprise the entire system, including the storage mediums, servers, controllers, etc. Therefore, the Applicant understands the Examiner's position to be that both the content to be served and the time period are all stored on the Examiner's broad definition of "content medium."

In order to clarify the claimed invention, claim 1 is amended to recite, "a period for reading a period stored on an individual self contained computer readable content medium content medium indicating a period of time during which a content on the content medium can be served . . ."

An "individual self contained computer readable content medium . . ." distinguishes the present invention from the cited references. In the cited references, the actual content and the time period for serving that content are stored on different entities. In fact, in the cited references, the content may originate from an entirely different location than the period to serve the content. Therefore, the entire serving system of the references is not an individual self contained computer readable content medium. In fact, a server itself contains electronics and other parts and is not a computer readable content medium. The present invention, as claimed, is beneficial over what is disclosed by the references in that, in one embodiment, for example, a

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particular content (i.e. a program) may be released by the producers while being ensured that the program will be served only during a particular time period. In contrast, in the cited references, since content (i.e. a movie) is stored separately from any respective time periods, the owners of the content may not have direct control over when the content is served. The individual self contained computer readable content medium that stores a movie in the cited references does not also store the serving time for that movie.

Therefore, in view of the distinctions between amended claim 1 and the cited references, it cannot be said that claim 1 is now anticipated by the references. For the references to anticipate claim 1, an actual movie itself would have to be stored on a computer readable storage medium along with a serving period for that movie. This obviously cannot be the case, since in the references, serving periods of the movies vary according to choices made by the distributor, as typically, movies used by such systems are "re-used."

The remaining independent claims 4, 9, 10, 12-25, are all amended similarly to claim 1.

In view of the above, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1- 25 is respectfully requested.

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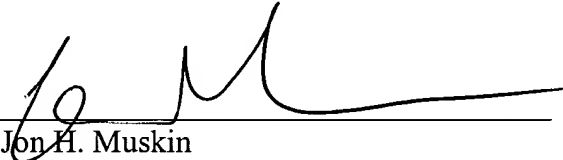
III. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the above-referenced application is in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** the pending claims in accordance with the following:

Not all of the claims are amended herein. Nevertheless, for the convenience of the Examiner, all of the pending claims are reproduced below.

1. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A terminal comprising:

a period reader reading a period stored on an individual self contained computer readable content medium, the content medium indicating a period of time during which a content on the content medium can be served;

a present time data generator generating present time data indicating a present time;

a comparator comparing the period of time with the present time; and

a server serving the content when said comparator judges that the present time falls within the period of time.

2. (AS TWICE AMENDED) A terminal according to claim 1, further comprising:

a single medium, forming the content medium, storing a plurality of locked contents, each locked content provided with a period thereof and wherein the server supplies said terminal with a key for unlocking the content.

3. (AS TWICE AMENDED) A terminal according to claim 1, wherein said server submits a request to a center when the present time falls within the period of time.

4. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A sales system comprising:
a terminal comprising:
a period reader reading a period stored on a self contained independent computer readable content medium indicating a period of time during which a content can be served by submitting a request to a center;
a present time generator for generating present time data indicating a present time;
a comparator comparing the period of time with the present time; and
a requestor submitting a request to a center for obtaining use of the content when said comparator judges that the present time falls within the period of time; and
the center comprising:
a key supplier supplying said terminal with a key for unlocking the content when the present time falls within the period of time.

5. (TWICE AMENDED) A sales system according to claim 4, wherein said center further comprises a database registered with the period of the content.

6. (AS TWICE AMENDED) A terminal according to claim 3, wherein said terminal further comprises second comparator comparing an effective period of time with the present time and determining whether the present time is within the effective period of time.

7. (AS TWICE AMENDED) A terminal according to claim 2, wherein said terminal further comprises:

- a disk for storing the contents; and
- an installer installing a loader for the content.

8. (AS TWICE AMENDED) A sales system according to claim 4, further comprising:

- a period data changer changing period data indicating a serving period of the contents; and
- wherein said terminal further comprising:
 - a second comparator comparing an effective period of time with the present time and determining whether the present time lies within the effective period of time.

9. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A self contained computer readable storage [device] medium which contains content, an interval period concerning the content, and a program executed by a computer,
wherein said program:

reads the period;

generates present time data indicating a present time;

compares the period with the present time; [and]

judges that the present time data falls within said period or falls outside the period ;

and

allows access to the content if the judging determines the present time data falls

within said period.

10. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A self contained computer readable storage [device] medium including both content and an interval period concerning the content, the storage device is accessed by a computer,

wherein said computer:

reads the period;

generates present time data indicating a present time;

compares the period with the present time; [and]

judges that the present time data falls within the period or falls outside of said

period; and

allows access to the content if the judging determines the present time data falls

within said period..

11. (AS TWICE AMENDED) A storage device according to claim 9, wherein the period is written as single terminal data indicating starting or ending time interval.

12. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A self-contained computer-readable medium encoded with a computer program which performs the following functions:

reads an interval period, stored on [a disk] the computer-readable medium, indicating a period of time during which content on the disk can be served;

generates present time data indicating a present time;

compares the period with the present time; [and]

judges that the present time falls within the period or falls outside of said period; and

.allows access to the content if the judging determines the present time data falls within said period.

13. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A terminal comprising:

a reading device which reads an interval period, stored on a self contained computer readable content medium[,] indicating a period of time during which content stored on the content medium can be served;

a clock for indicating a present time;

a comparator which determines if the present time falls within the period of time; and

a server which serves content on the content medium when the comparator determines that the present time falls within the period of time.

14. (TWICE AMENDED) A sales system comprising:

a self contained independent computer readable content medium storing a locked content and an interval period for the locked content;

a center which provides a key to unlock the locked content when a present time falls within the period;

15. (FOUR TIMES AMENDED) A method for ascertaining a sales period exists, said method comprising:

reading an interval period stored on a self contained independent computer readable medium indicating a serving period of time;

generating present time data indicating a present time; [and]

comparing the period stored on the medium with the present time to judge whether said present time falls within the period of time; and

serving content stored on the medium if the comparing determines that the present time falls within the period of time.

16. (TWICE AMENDED) A storage device readable by a computer comprising:

a storer storing a content on a self contained independent computer readable storage medium, the medium including an interval period concerning the content and a program executed by the computer, wherein said program:

reads the period;

generates present time data indicating a present time; [and]

compares the period with the present time;

an accessor accessing said program; and

a server serving the content when the period is compared with the present time and it is determined that the present time falls within said period.

17. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A self contained independent computer readable storage medium comprising:

a content stored on the medium assessable by a user via a computer;

period data stored with the content on the medium indicating an interval period of time during which the content can be accessed by the user;

a program which causes the computer to refuse access to the content by the user if a present date falls outside of the period of time indicated by the period data; and

a serving unit to serve the content when said program does not cause the computer to refuse access to the content.

18. (TWICE AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with a computer program which performs the following [functions] operations:

- reads a period, stored on a disk, indicating an interval period of time during which a content on the disk can be served;
- generates present time data indicating a present time;
- compares the period with the present time; and
- transforms a result of said comparison to data reflecting that a user is allowed to utilize the content, when the present time falls within the period; and
- serves the content when said comparing step determines that said present time falls within said period.

19. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A method for ascertaining a sales period exists, said method comprising:

- reading a period stored on a self contained computer readable storage medium indicating an interval period of time;
- generating present time data indicating a present time;
- comparing the period stored on the medium with the present time to judge whether said present time falls within the period; and
- serving content stored on the medium storing the period to a storage medium when said comparing determines that said present time falls within said period.

20. (ONCE AMENDED) A terminal comprising:

a period reader reading a period stored on a self contained independent content medium indicating a period of time during which a content stored directly on the content medium released to end users can be served;

a present time data generator generating present time data indicating a present time;

a comparator comparing the period of time with the present time; and

a server serving the content when said comparator judges that the present time falls within the period of time.

21. (ONCE AMENDED) A terminal comprising:

a period reader reading a period stored on a self contained independent content medium indicating a period of time during which a content stored directly on the content medium can be served;

a present time data generator generating present time data indicating a present time;

a comparator comparing the period of time with the present time; and

a requesting unit requesting a service of the content when said comparator judges that the present time falls within the period of time.

22. (ONCE AMENDED) An independent self contained computer readable storage

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[device] medium released to end users which contains content, an interval period concerning the content, and a program executed by a computer, wherein said program:

reads the period directly from the storage medium;

generates present time data indicating a present time;

compares the period with the present time; [and]

judges that the present time data falls within said period or falls outside the period;

and

allows access to the content if the judging judges that the present time falls within said period.

23. (ONCE AMENDED) A self contained computer readable storage [device] medium readable by a computer comprising:

a storer storing a content on the medium including an interval period concerning the content and a program executed by the computer, wherein said program:

reads the period;

generates present time data indicating a present time; and

compares the period with the present time;

an accessor accessing said program; and

a requesting unit requesting service of the content when the period is compared with the present time and it is determined that the present time falls within said period.

24. (ONCE AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium encoded with a computer program which performs the following [functions] operations:

- reads a period, stored on a disk, indicating an interval period of time during which a content on the disk can be served;
- generates present time data indicating a present time;
- compares the period with the present time; and
- transforms a result of said comparison to data reflecting that a user is allowed to utilize the content, when the present time falls within the period; and
- requests the content when said comparing step determines that said present time falls within said period.

25. (ONCE AMENDED) A method for ascertaining a sales period exists, said method comprising:

- reading a period stored on a self contained computer readable storage medium indicating an interval period of time;
- generating present time data indicating a present time;
- comparing the period stored on the storage medium with the present time to judge whether said present time falls within the period; and

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requesting content [from] stored on the storage medium when said comparing determines that said present time falls within said period.